A Ghayr Muqallid writes that the Four Madhaahib are a Bid'ah According to Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله

Question: I have recently read a booklet entitled "*Madh'habi Firqa Parasti awr Islaam*" by Mukhtaar Ahmad Nadwi. The booklet examines the following of Madhaahib and page 39 of the booklet has a heading stating that following the Madhaahib is a Bid'ah according to Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله. He then quotes from Shah Wali'ullaah رحمه الله's book *Insaaf*, which reads: "Muslims in the first and second centuries of Islaam knew nothing about following a particular Madh'hab and there was no culture of following the Madhaahib during those times as well. The pious predecessors had no idea of what Madhaahib are all about because everyone followed only the Shari'ah of Hadhrat Muhammad ρ. They did only that which Rasulullaah ρ said and did and all of the Sahabah ψ, Taabi'een and those after them agreed on the fact that the only being worthy of bring followed was Rasulullaah ρ. They all prohibited the act of following the words and Fataawaa of any one person."

What I wish to ask is whether Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله was opposed to the following of the Madhaahib? Does he regard the following of the Madhaahib as we have them today as a Bid'ah? Is will be appreciated if you could reply with references to the works of Shah Wali'ullaah رحمه الله.

Answer: The reference attributed to Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله is erroneous and in fact slander against him. we will quote the works of Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله later, which will make it clear that he never opposed the following of the Madhaahib and himself said that Rasulullaah ρ advised him to remain within the four Madhaahib. He also stated that the Hanafi Madh'hab conforms with the Sunnah, as attested to by Rasulullaah ρ.

When you read the text of Hadhrat Shah رحمه الله's works you will see that he was never opposed to the Madhaahib. The text quoted in which he describes the condition of the Muslims in the first and second centuries of Islaam is actually quoted from Abu Taalib Makki رحمه الله , which he has stated in his book *Qootul Quloob* and it is the demand of honesty that the text be attributed to him and not to Hadhrat Shah رحمه الله. It is therefore dishonest to attribute the test to Hadhrat Shah رحمه الله and also misleading to construe the text to be against the concept of Taqleed. The text was translated incorrectly. Hereunder follows the correct translation: "It must be noted that people during the first and second centuries of Islaam had not agreed on a fixed Madh'hab. For this reason, Abu Taalib Makki رحمه الله stated that books and compilations are all new innovations and that it was not the practice of people during those times to quote the statements of other people, to issue Fataawaa according to only one Madh'hab and to choose the way of only one Madh'hab in all matters, relying on it totally."[1]

Does this tie in with what the booklet quotes? If this is not deception, then what else can it be? Look at how "had not agreed on a fixed Madh'hab" was translated as "knew nothing about following a particular Madh'hab". This is either a poor reflection of the writer's knowledge or a deliberate obfuscation. The only point that can be proven from the text of Abu Taalib Makki رحمه الله is that following a particular Madh'hab (*Taqleed Shakhsi*) was not in vogue during the first and second centuries of Islaam. This however, became popular in the later centuries. In fact. Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله writes further: ""It was during the second century of Islaam

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[1] *Insaaf* pg.57.

that following a particular *Mujtahid* became common and there was scarcely anyone who did not do so. This was compulsory."[2]

There is a lengthy discussion on whether Taqleed Shakhsi was prevalent during the time of the Sahabah ψ, Taab'ieen and those after them. There is also the question on what is the status of Taqleed in the Shari'ah and whether or not it is proven in the Qur'aan and the Ahadeeth. These and other discussions have been addressed in our booklet titled "The need for Taqleed according to the Shari'ah." One should study it in detail. It will Inshaa Allaah put an end to any doubts or misgivings one may have about Taqleed. This booklet has been printed in *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah*.

Here follows quotations from Shah Wali'ullaah رحمه الله:

Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله writes: "CHAPTER ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOWING THE FOUR *MADHAAHIB* AND THE SEVERITY OF GIVING THIS UP. One ought to know that there is immense benefit in following the four *Madhaahib* and tremendous harm in turning away from them."[3] In the same book, he writes further, "The second reason for following a *Madh'hab* is that Rasulullaah ρ said, 'Follow the broader consensus of people'. Since there are no *Madhaahib* on the truth besides the four *Madhaahib*, following them will be following the broader consensus of people and failing to follow them will be to leave the broader consensus of people, which will be against the instruction of Rasulullaah ρ."[4]

Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله described the followers of the four *Madhaahib* as the broader consensus of people and the one failing to follow any perform them as a lost camel who really follows the dictates of his Nafs.
He further quotes Imaam Baghawi رحمه الله, who said, "It is therefore compulsory for the person who does not have all these qualifications (of being a *Mujtahid*) to follow someone in all affairs that pertain to him."[5]

Hadhrat Shah Wali'ullaah رحمه الله also says, "There are numerous benefits in it (in following one of the four *Madhaahib*) that are no secret to anyone. These are especially required in these days when people lack courage, when carnal passions have taken deep root in people's souls and when ever person is obsessed only with his opinion."[6]

In another of his works, Hadhrat Shah Wali'ullaah رحمه الله says, "It was during the second century of Islaam that following a particular *Mujtahid* became common and there was scarcely anyone who did not do so. This was compulsory."[7]

He also said, "The entire Ummah, or rather those of them who are dependable, are unanimous about the fact that it is permissible to follow one of these four *Madhaahib* that have been methodically systemised and recorded. This unanimity remains to this day (and opposing it is a means of deviation)."[8]

Hadhrat Shah رحمه الله also says, "The gist of it all is that following these four *Madhaahib* is something extremely subtle that Allaah has inspired in the hearts of the Ulema and

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[2] *Insaaf* pg.59.
[3] *ul Jayyid* pg.31.
[4] *Uqdul Jayyid* pg.33.
[5] *Uqdul Jayyid* pg.9.
[6] *Hujjatullaahil Baaligha* (Vol.1 Pg.361).
[7] *Insaaf* pg.59.
[8] *Hujjatullaahil Baaligha* (Vol.1 Pg.361).

upon which they have declared unanimity, regardless of whether they understand it or not."[9]

He also says, "If there is a common man in India or in the territories of *Maa Waraa'un Nahr* (places where there are predominantly Hanafis) and there are no Ulema belonging to the Shaafi'ee, Maaliki or Hanbali schools of jurisprudence, as well as no books of these *Madhaahib*, it will be Waajib (compulsory) for him to follow the *Madh'hab* of Imaam Abu Haneefah رحمه الله. It will be Haraam for him to leave this *Madh'hab* because if he does this, he will be removing the collar of the Shari'ah from his neck and will be left a useless and wasted soul."[10]

Despite being a *Mujtahid* in his own right, Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله was commanded by Rasulullaah ρ to follow a *Madh'hab* and never to leave one. He writes in his *Fuyoodhul Haramain*[11] that he was commanded by Rasulullaah ρ to do three things that he was not in favour of. In fact, he states, he was so staunchly disinclined towards these three things that the fact that he turned to them is in fact a sign of their truth. The second of these that he mentions is to follow one of the four *Madhaahib* without leaving it. He states further that Rasulullaah ρ also informed him that the Hanafi *Madh'hab* has a most excellent methodology that is closer to the Sunnah as it was documented during the period of Imaam Bukhaari رحمه الله and his contemporaries."[12]

The summary of Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله comments are:

1. The practice of following a particular person was common during the times of the Sahabah ψ and the Taabi'een
2. Following one of the four *Madhaahib* entails following the broader consensus of people (which is compulsory in the words of the Ahadeeth) and failing to follow it will lead to deviation
3. The practice of following one of the four *Madhaahib* became common after the second century of Islaam
4. Following one of the four *Madhaahib* is something extremely subtle that Allaah has inspired in the hearts of people
5. The Ummah is unanimous about following the four Imaams
6. Taqleed is Waajib (compulsory) for anyone who is not a *Mujtahid*
7. There are numerous Deeni benefits to following a specific Imaam
8. Rasulullaah ρ instructed Hadhrat Shah Wali'ullaah رحمه الله to follow an Imaam
9. Rasulullaah ρ told him that the Hanafi *Madh'hab* is closest to the Sunnah
10. It is Haraam for a common man to forsake Taqleed. In fact, this actually leads him to leaving Islaam (as admitted to by the leader of the Ghayr Muqallideen Moulana Muhammad Husayn Batalwi, as s we shall quote later)

Read through these quotations carefully and decide whether they actually support or refute what has been attributed to Shah Wali'ullaah رحمه الله. It is also worth noting what Hadhrat Shah رحمه الله has to say about the group of people who criticise the Fuqahaa and speak ill of them. He says: "Most of the people who claim to be people of the Ahadeeth concern themselves only with collecting chains of narrators and determining Ahadeeth which are *Ghareeb* or *Shaadh* from many that are either *Mowdoo* or *Maqloob*. They do not concern themselves with the words of the Hadith,

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[9] *Insaaf* pg.47.
[10] *Insaaf* pg. 70-71.
[11] Pgs. 64-65.
[12] *Fuyoodhul Haramain* pg.48.

do not understand the meanings of the Ahadeeth and cannot derive rulings from its depths. These people condemn the jurists and claim that they oppose the Qur'aan and the Ahadeeth without realising that they can never attain the knowledge that Allaah had granted to the jurists. They are really sinful for making such statements."[13]

The Ghayr Muqallideen take pride in their abandonment of the Madhaahib and wish to make others free thinkers like themselves. They however fail to see the harms in this and ignore the dangers that the pious predecessors have cautioned against. If they forsake their prejudices and obstinacy to think seriously about the matter, they will certainly find no reason to remain the way they are.

The reviver of the Ahle Hadith group Janaab Nawaab Siddique Hasan Khan of Bopal writes the following about his group, "There has now surfaced a boastful group who (despite being far from it) claim that they have the knowledge of the Hadith and the Qur'aan and also claim that they practise it and have recognition of Allaah."[14]

He writes further, "How strange! How can they (these *Ghayr Muqallideen*) call themselves sincere believers in Towheed while alleging that others (because of their *Taqleed*) are Mushrikeen, whereas they (the *Ghayr Muqallideen*) are most obstinate and mulish in their ways?" He later concludes the discussion by saying, "This way (of the *Ghayr Muqallideen*) is nothing but a great tribulation and means of deviation."[15]

Moulana Muhammad Husayn Batalwi whom the *Ghayr Muqallideen* look up to wrote in his book *Ishaa'atus Sunnah*: "Twenty five years of experience has proven to me that those who forsake following the *Mujtahideen* and a *Madh'hab* eventually end up bidding farewell to Islaam. Many of the become Christians and other become people who follow no religion at all. The least that happens is that they no longer follow the Shari'ah and fall into sin. Some of them openly discard the Jumu'ah salaah, salaah in congregation and fasting. They also do to abstain from liquor and interest and those who do not indulge in these open sins, do so for ulterior motives, but then indulge in secret sins. They are often also involved in illicit affairs with women. Although there are many reasons for a person in Deen to become irreligious and to leave the Deen, one of the main reasons is also when people with no knowledge forsake *Taqleed* (following a *Madh'hab*)."[16]

And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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[13] *Insaaf* pg.53.
[14] *Al Hitta fi Dhikri Sihaahis Sitta* Pg.27-28.
[15] *Taqleede A'immah* pgs.17-18
[16] *Sabeelur Rashaad* pg.10, *Kalimatul Fasl* pg.10 and *Taqleede A'immah* pgs.16-17.